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REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this Patent Application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks. No additional fee is required for this Amendment as the number of independent claims has not changed, and the total number of claims has decreased.

Telephone Interview Summary

Applicants thank the Examiner for his time and courtesies extended during a telephone interview with Applicants' undersigned attorney on 07 December 2004. Applicants proposed the above Amendment and argued the following remarks. The Examiner indicated the Amendment and remarks appeared to overcome the rejection over the Mochida Patent, however, subject to a more detailed review of the Mochida Patent. No agreement was reached.

Request for Additional Telephone Interview

Applicants kindly request the Examiner to contact the undersigned at (847) 490-1400 to schedule another telephone interview, to further discuss the merits of this Patent Application.

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Amendment to the Specification

Applicants amended the Specification at page 5, last paragraph to correct a typographical error. The two levers are identified in the drawings by element reference numerals 41 and 43. Element reference numeral 42 is a bearing, as described in the same paragraph.

Amendment to the Claims

Applicants amended Claim 1 to include limitations of dependent Claim 13. Claims 6 and 13 have been canceled as redundant, in view of amended Claim 1.

Claim 7 has been amended to depend from Claim 5 instead of canceled Claim 6.

Claims 1, 2, 5, and 12 have been amended to correct a typographical and/or unintentional translation error by substituting “operating part” (40) for the incorrectly named “actuating element” (40). Support for this Amendment can be found throughout Applicants’ Specification and drawings, for example at page 5, last paragraph. No new matter has been added to the claims by this Amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

The rejection of Claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Mochida, U.S. Patent 4,250,976, is respectfully traversed.

Applicants amended Claim 1 to recite that the switching element (35) is operated one of indirectly and directly by the operating part (40) for emitting the switching signal. The switching signal is emitted by the switching element to communicate that a blocking piece has reached the locking position or makes a transition from the opened position into the locking position (Specification, page 2, last paragraph).

The Mochida Patent discloses a steering lock device having a safety system (Col. 1, lines 37-48). The safety system of the Mochida Patent includes a vehicle sensing switch 28 which is generally external of the lock 34 (See FIG. 3). In the lock of the Mochida Patent, when an ignition key 22 is turned from the LOCK position (See FIG. 4), a hanger rod 50 is lifted in a direction "C" by a cam 48 to withdraw a locking bolt 18 (Col. 4, lines 14-24). The bolt 18 is held in an unlocked position by the cam lever 48. When the vehicle begins to move, the switch 28 closes to activate a solenoid 62 as a secondary safety device to retain the bolt in the elevated, unlocked position. If while the vehicle is moving, the key 22 is moved accidentally to the lock position, the solenoid retains the plunger rod 54 in the elevated position

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to keep the locking bolt 18 from locking (Col. 4, lines 20-37). When the vehicle stops, the switch 28 is disengaged to allow the bolt to drop into locking position.

In the Mochida Patent, the switch 28 is operated upon by a vehicle motion sensing system, not a lever in the lock, as in Applicants' claimed invention. The switch 28 is only activated by movement of the vehicle. The switch 28 is not operated by any element of the lock. For this reason, the Mochida Patent does not teach or suggest an operating part of a lock that operates an actuating element for emitting a signal. The Mochida Patent actually teaches an opposite function, where a switch is activated externally and activates a solenoid that in turn acts upon a locking bolt within the lock.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants assert the Mochida Patent does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of amended Claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

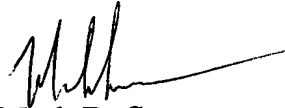
Conclusion

Applicants intend to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicants have not addressed in this response, Applicants' undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner.

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Applicants sincerely believe that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully request early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark D. Swanson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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